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BRIEFING SPORTS NEW LOOK FOR 2004!

IT'S A NEW YEAR AND A NEW LOOK for the *Bloomington Briefing*. The design features more color and useful information. And thanks to printing innovations, costs are the same as the previous style – just 24 cents to print and mail each *Briefing*. Tell us what you think about the new design by contacting Communications Administrator Diann Kirby at 952-563-8818 or dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

YOUTH ACTIVITY GUIDE

LOOKING TO GET YOUR SEVEN-YEAR-OLD into soccer? Is your 10th grader talking about co-rec softball? Bloomington offers a wide range of activities for youth and a new online youth activity guide makes it easier to find them. The *A-Z Youth Activity Guide* lists youth sports and activities alphabetically and by age and season. The guide is located at www.tricitypartners.org and on the City's Web site, keywords "youth guide."



CHECK OUT CURBSIDE CLEAN-UP DATES

SPRING IS ON ITS WAY AND CURBSIDE Clean-up is quickly approaching. For your collection dates, *see page 7*.

CHECK YOUR PRESSURE

THANKS TO A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN the City of Bloomington, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota and the American Heart Association, a blood pressure machine is now located in the main hallway at Creekside. The machine is available to the public, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. , and Saturday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Use of the machine is free.



ARRESTING TOPICS

ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS GET A HANDS-ON LOOK AT OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT

Resident Carol Thomsen tries on body armor at last fall's Citizens' Police Academy.

TWENTY-NINE PEOPLE RESPONDED to the call of the 6th Citizens' Police Academy last fall. The 10-week course gave participants an inside look at the Bloomington Police Department's Traffic, Special Investigations, Bomb Squad, K-9 units and more. Activities

included Department tours, a ride-along with street officers and role-playing with "Shoot, Don't Shoot" scenarios.

The Citizen's Police Academy provides those who live and work in Bloomington an opportunity to learn more about how the Police Department

operates and its policies, priorities and challenges. For more information or for an application for the fall 2004 Academy, call Lieutenant Shaun LaDue at 952-563-4900.



BLOOMINGTON HOME IMPROVEMENT FAIR

CITY STAFF AND EXHIBITORS WILL HELP YOU NAIL DOWN YOUR HOME PROJECT



Saturday, February 28.
9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Bloomington Civic Plaza,
1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd.

WANT TO LEARN HOW TO LAY CERAMIC tile? Get tips on installing ceiling fans and light fixtures? Find out more about

the City's codes? The Bloomington Home Improvement Fair will give you the tools to nail down your remodeling plans. Participating exhibitors will represent a variety of trades ranging from window replacements to porch additions. City

staff will also be available for questions.



Do you qualify for a home improvement loan? See page 8.

The City issued 6,680 building, mechanical, electrical and plumbing permits for single-family residential homes in 2003. Permit fees totaled \$551,670.

INTERVIEW WITH A VENDOR



JIM NASH,
OWNER OF
Northstar

Home Improvement and one of this year's vendors, has participated at various community fairs over the last 10 years. Compared to the larger home improvement shows that can be overwhelming, Nash says the Bloomington Home Improvement Fair is personalized to better serve customers' needs.

"Vendors at Bloomington's Home Improvement Fair want to do business in our community," said Nash, a resident since 1969. "What's nice is the smaller, intimate setting where you have a better chance of one-on-one communication."

Nash, whose company specializes in siding and replacement windows, will present the latest in exterior vinyl siding products.

Stop by on February 28 and say "hello" to Jim!



SEMINAR SCHEDULE

10 A.M.

Ceramic Tile
by Home Depot

How to Choose a Contractor
by NorthStar Home Improvement

15 Steps to Reality Remodeling
by New Spaces

Dutch Elm Disease and Other Tree Care Tips
by Rainbow Treecare

11 A.M.

Faux Painting
by Home Depot

Remodeling Project: From Concept to Completion
by Plekkenpol Builders

Aging in Place: Universal Design
by New Spaces

Busting the Top 10 Myths of Home Comfort and Energy Use
by Standard Heating

12 P.M.

Deck Design and Building
by Home Depot

Be Your Own General Contractor
by Owner Built Construction Mgmt.

How to Choose Replacement Windows
by Renewal by Anderson

Building Code for Remodeling
by City's B and I Division

1 P.M.

Landscaping
by Home Depot

Decorative Driveway Pavements
by Driveway Design

Three and Four Season Season Porches
by Roncor Construction

Time-of-Sale: All You Need to Know
by City's B and I Division

PLUS Kids Workshop Booth *by Home Depot*



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
1800 WEST OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD
BLOOMINGTON MN 55431-3027

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THE COST OF REVITALIZATION

BUILDING AND RENEWAL OF OUR COMMUNITY

By Mayor Gene Winstead

AGE AND USE HAVE AFFECTED SOME AREAS of Bloomington. The community needs to be constantly renewed; however, the City’s resources to do so are finite. We will use these resources wisely and may have to identify additional resources or other funding to enhance our community. The Council is taking the approach of rightsizing – that, is to figure out the balance between redevelopment’s costs and the benefits that it brings to everyone.

It is important to residents that their neighborhoods look good and fit their needs. They want the vacant gas station on the corner removed, more housing options and well-maintained streets. Revitalization of some areas of our community will only occur when the City pays for part of the costs.

According to the feedback I receive, residents also want to continue to receive City services that meet the many different needs of our community. Some residents use parks and picnic shelters often. Other residents’ priorities include youth activities or senior programs.

Local government is directly or indirectly responsible for the health and welfare of its citizens . Some services can’t be cut or cut back simply because they’re not profitable or not always used by everyone. Police and fire protection must be available round-the-clock and we don’t pick and choose which streets we will plow in order to save money. These services, similar to insurance, are there when you need them.

We have planned for a downturn and, as a result, the City has successfully

balanced its budget during these challenging economic times. With the loss of state aid and the downturn of the economy, local governments are faced with providing services to residents while still keeping taxes affordable. Finding ways to fulfill the City’s mission of “Building and Renewing the Community” is also more difficult.

The Council, however, knows the critical importance of renewing the community for the long term and has chosen five top redevelopment priorities for our city called the “String of Pearls.” See map below. Improving and investing in these areas not only revitalizes our community’s commercial areas, but also increases home values in the surrounding neighborhoods.

CITY REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



These five areas have been called the “String of Pearls.”

FRANCE AVENUE AND OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD

Public improvements including street widening, new turn lanes, sidewalks, signals, medians and landscaping will begin this spring. A 4,000 square foot retail building was constructed last fall on the southeast quadrant of the intersection. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has acquired the majority of properties in the redevelopment site. Proposals for redevelopment on the northeast corner are due to the HRA in February.

94TH STREET AND LYNDALE AVENUE

Construction is underway for Realife, a 96-unit senior cooperative scheduled for completion in August 2004.

84TH STREET AND LYNDALE AVENUE

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority, in partnership with United Properties, will construct a new Cub Foods store and 10,000 square foot retail center, 75 to 100 units of senior housing and 50 to 60 townhouses. Construction is scheduled to begin in May on the retail portion of the redevelopment.

AIRPORT SOUTH

This Mall of America expansion project on the former Met Center site includes a 2.25 million square foot integrated mixed-use center with retail, hotel, office and entertainment elements. Construction of a 330,000 square foot IKEA home furnishings store is underway on the site and is scheduled to open in summer 2004.

The City is working with McGough Development to construct a mixed-use, transit-oriented development located on the light rail transit line at Bloomington Central Station. Formal plans are expected to be submitted in February 2004 with first-phase construction to begin later in the year.

AREA AROUND BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA

Constructing Bloomington Civic Plaza revitalized a highly visible parcel at 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road and opened the door for other redevelopment in the area. For instance, the move freed up the old municipal building site at 2215 West Old Shakopee Road for redevelopment. Construction of 128 condominiums and 40 townhouses on the seven-acre site is valued around \$50 million and will result in a substantial increase in the City’s tax base.



BRIEFING

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Visit our Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us

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The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status with regard to public assistance in employment or the provision of services. The City of Bloomington does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as required by Section 35.107 of the U.S. Department of Justice Regulations, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as mandated by Section 8.53 of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regulations. For information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; phone: 952-563-8700; TTY: 952-563-8740.

2004 CITY PROPERTY TAXES

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES REDUCED GENERAL FUND BUDGET

FACED WITH CHALLENGES TO BALANCE the 2004 General Fund Budget due to a \$2 million loss in state aid, **the City decreased its General Fund Budget by almost 2 percent.** The City Council’s adoption of the 2004 General Fund Budget in December resulted in a tax levy of \$34,129,453.

The increase was a result of the Market Value Credit given to homeowners by the State, but not paid to the City. If the State had paid the City for the Market Value Credit, the City’s property tax increase would have been 1 percent. The City’s levy for 2004 will yield the same amount it was to receive in property tax and aids in 2003.

Based on this tax levy, the City’s portion of property taxes – approximately 32 percent – will increase from \$43.58 to \$49.38 per month for the owner of a median-priced single-family home in Bloomington with a 2004 market value of \$195,800.

Conservative increase

“Including the 2004 increase, the City’s total levy dollar increase averaged 2.7 percent annually over the last 11 years,” explained Lori Economy-Scholler, Bloomington Chief Financial Officer. “The City’s strong financial position and conservative spending pattern has helped to keep tax increases low.”

Home value increases

Median home value has increased from \$178,800 in 2003 to \$195,800 in 2004, a 9.9 percent increase. A strong residential property market, moderate market increases for other property types and the state’s 2001 property tax

reform increased overall residential property taxes for 2004. These factors also shifted the burden for the City’s share of the taxes from commercial/ industrial and apartment properties to single-family residential properties. Due to the tax reform, even without a levy increase for 2004, the average home would have experienced a \$3.27 per month tax increase.

Responsible budgeting

The City made adjustments in 2002 and 2003 for declining local revenues. Even with the loss of state monies in 2004, the City’s ongoing commitment to cost-effective services again resulted in the City working to minimize the increase. As a result, the levy is \$1,780,000 below the state-imposed levy limit.

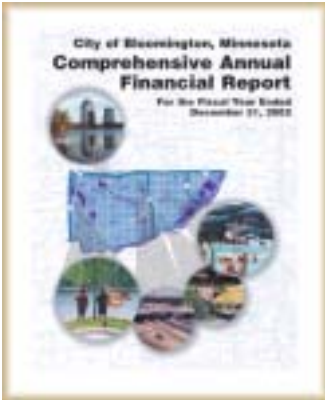
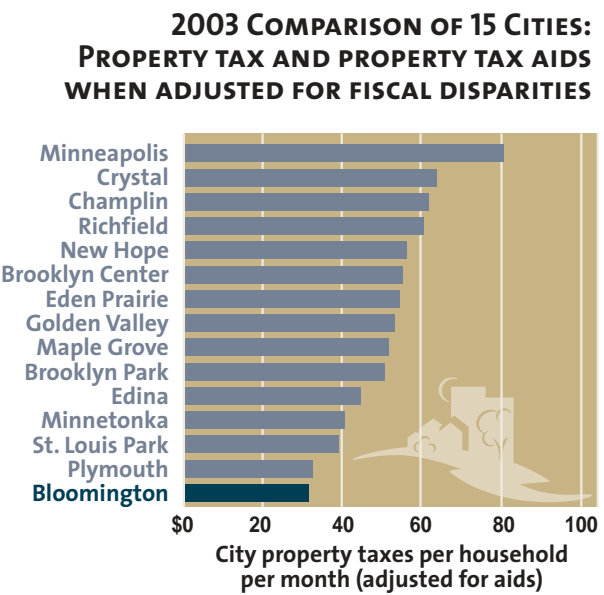
In a 2003 comparison of 15 communities in Hennepin County with more than 20,000 residents, the average household cost of services in terms of property taxes and property tax aids (when adjusted for Fiscal Disparities) showed Bloomington ranking the lowest, with the average household paying \$ 31.23 per month in property taxes to the City.

See bar graph at right.

Public works, police and fire services account for about 60 percent of the monthly services for which homeowners pay. *See chart below.*

From 1995 through 2002, utility fees remained unchanged. For 2004, utility fees will increase \$1.45 or 4.9 percent per month, for an annual average increase of 1 percent since 1995.

MONTHLY COST FOR CITY SERVICES		
Service type	2003	2004
Police	\$13.09	\$14.20
Public Works	8.80	10.25
Community Services	5.83	6.68
Debt and capital	5.53	4.39
Finance, Legal, Human Resources	2.58	1.68
Fire	3.18	6.94
Technical Services	1.65	1.92
Community Development	2.04	2.52
Administration	.88	.80
Monthly total for City services	\$43.58	\$49.38
Median home value	\$178,800	\$195,800



CITY RECOGNIZED FOR ANNUAL REPORT

THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON’S *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* RECEIVED THE CERTIFICATE of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for fiscal year ended December 31, 2002. The City has received this award for the past 31 years, longer than any other Minnesota city. The award is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

SECOND-GENERATION COUNCILMEMBER SERVES CITY

WHEN AMY GRADY TOOK OFFICE IN January, she followed in the footsteps of her late father, Robert Darr, who served on the Bloomington City Council from 1973 to 1981. Like father, like daughter, Grady also holds the at-large seat.

Giving back to the community is in Grady’s blood. Both of her parents were very active when she was growing up and local issues were a way of life.

“My parents always taught me that if you get the benefits, you give back,” Grady said. “It is important to me to do something that makes a difference.”

An attorney with her own firm, Grady has volunteered many years of community service including her involvement with Bloomington’s Planning and Charter commissions, Port Authority and Chamber of Commerce.

Grady is looking forward to serving with others on the Council, whom she described as “a wonderful group of people.” Grady was elected to the City Council in November, filling the seat left vacant by former Councilmember Mike Fossum who did not seek re-election.



OLD TOWN HALL REUSE STUDY

ART CENTER BUILDING DEMOLITION FIRST STEP

IN FEBRUARY, THE CITY COUNCIL WILL select a consultant to study alternative uses for the Old Town Hall building and site at 10200 Penn Avenue South.

Through interviews, the firm conducting the study will gather information on the building’s historic importance, and the cost and feasibility of reuse alternatives.

History

Old Town Hall was built in 1892 as a place for public meetings, church services, education and social gatherings. Its use evolved to house government offices until 1964 when City offices moved across the street. Soon after, the City Council approved Old Town Hall’s use by the Bloomington Historical Society.

Reuse study

The reuse study will address the ongoing needs for maintenance, repair and renovation of the Old Town Hall building. Demolition of the former Art Center building, located on the site, is one step in creating a site that will support Old Town Hall’s reuse.

Council’s goals

- The City Council instructed the consultant to prepare a plan that:
- Fits well with site constraints and the changing neighborhood.
 - Preserves the Old Town Hall as a reminder of Bloomington’s history.
 - Is cost-effective for Bloomington taxpayers.
 - Establishes the building as a citywide landmark and neighborhood-gathering place.

Schedule

The reuse study recommendations will be presented to City advisory commissions and the City Council in summer 2004. For more information, call Community Development Director Larry Lee at 952-563-8947.

MORE ON OLD TOWN HALL

A history of Bloomington with emphasis on the Old Town Hall will be presented at a Gideon Pond House Open House on Sunday, March 21. *See details on page 5.*

CONTACT PARKS AND RECREATION AT 952-563-8877 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE ACTIVITIES.

GET ACTIVE



Youth Activities Kids, Get Out and Get Active!

ADULT TENNIS DRILLS

TAUGHT BY A CERTIFIED TENNIS instructor, drills are practice sessions to improve stroke production. Facilities include locker rooms, showers, sauna, whirlpool, steam room, swimming pool, indoor running track and exercise room.

When:

Session I: February 25 - April 1.

Session II: April 7 - May 13.

Times:

Beginner: Wednesdays, 6 - 7 p.m.

Intermed.: Thursdays, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Where: 98th Street Northwest Athletic Club.

Cost: \$54 for six one-hour lessons.

Limit: Eight per class; minimum of four.

DAYTIME VOLLEYBALL

EXERCISE AND ENJOY VOLLEYBALL IN the mornings. All games are played at the Bloomington National Guard Training and Community Center. You don't need a team – one will be formed each time.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays year-round.

Where: National Guard Training and Community Center, 3300 W. 98th Street.

Time: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Cost: \$1.25 each session.

MEN'S, WOMEN'S AND CO-REC SOFTBALL

When: One evening per week starting May 3.

Where: Valley View and Dred Scott playfields.

Cost: \$520 per team - Recreation.
\$710 per team - Fast Pitch and Double Header.
\$810 per team - Open.

Deadline: March 12.

PLAY BALL!

PARKS AND RECREATION IS GEARING up for another season of adult softball - a great way to exercise, meet new people, socialize with co-workers or friends and have a little competition. More than 300 teams compete throughout the summer and fall in Bloomington.

Hosted at the Dred Scott and Valley View playfields, leagues are for those age 18 and older. Divisions include men's, men's fast pitch, women's and co-rec.

Leagues are formed in March and play May through July. Teams are sanctioned in both of Minnesota's major softball associations, the Amateur Softball Association and United States Specialty Sports Association. Play ranges from men's and women's open leagues to recreational. Co-rec is offered at the competitive and recreational levels.

For more information, call Recreation Supervisor Jason Hicks at 952-563-8880 or e-mail jhicks@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

BLOOMINGTON LOVES ITS KIDS CARNIVAL

Saturday, February 21, 12:30 - 3 p.m.

Northwestern Health Sciences University, 84th and Penn Ave.

GAMES, EXHIBITS, FOOD, POLICE AND FIRE DEMONSTRATIONS, entertainment and lots of fun for kids and families.

Event is free! Please bring a food item for the VEAP food shelf.

SPRING EGG HUNT

FOR CHILDREN, AGES 8 AND UNDER

Saturday, April 10, 11 a.m.

Normandale Lake Park, 84th and Normandale Blvd.

KEEP LOOKING – THEY'RE OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. THIS "eggs"traordinary annual event is sponsored by Parks and Recreation and the Bloomington Breakfast Optimist Club.

SUMMER SPECTRUM

SUPER SIGN-UP SATURDAY AT NEW LOCATION!

Saturday, April 17, 9 – 11 a.m.

Bloomington Civic Plaza,

1800 W. Old Shakopee Road



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO ASK

questions, organize your child's summer and

register in one place. Summer Spectrum, an

eight-week collaborative effort between

Bloomington Parks and Recreation,

Community Education and the Bloomington

Art Center, offers a variety of summer activities

for youth, complete with transportation and

childcare. Look for more information on all of the

Summer Spectrum programs when the brochure is

delivered in late March. For more information, call

Parks and Recreation or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword "spectrum."

GALAXY YOUTH CENTER

REACH FOR THE STARS!

Where: Valley View Middle School, 8900 Portland Avenue.

Hours: Monday - Friday, 2:20 - 6 p.m.

Bus home : 4: 30 p.m., 5:30 p.m.

Where: Oak Grove Middle School, 1300 W. 106th Street.

Olson Middle School, 4551 W. 102nd Street.

Hours: Monday - Friday, 2:20 - 5 p.m.

Bus home: 4: 30 p.m.

Cost: \$25 per quarter or \$.50 daily.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR YOUTH GRADES 6 through 8 at Galaxy Youth Centers, located in all three middle schools. The centers provide opportunities to empower youth through recreation, leadership, socialization, learning and service activities. Center activities include music, foosball, ping-pong, billiards, video games, arts and crafts, service projects and sports. For more information, call 952-681-5807.



THIS FRIENDLY COMPETITION CHALLENGES

employees to shape up! Bloomington worksite

coordinators receive special training and all

materials needed to participate in the contest

that runs from April 19 to May 30. Every week,

employees record points for aerobic, strength-

training and flexibility activities. Trophies are awarded to the companies

with the most points per employee. Sponsored by Parks and Recreation,

this is a great way to introduce fitness, team spirit and a little fun into

your workplace. Call Parks and Recreation and sign up by April 5.



ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO BE HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

LIFESTYLE CHANGES, INCLUDING inactivity, have dramatically increased the number of overweight and obese youth. Obesity not only increases a youth's risk for numerous health problems, but also the likelihood of discrimination, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, an overweight youth is likely to become an overweight adult, putting them at more risk for chronic disease.

Encourage youth to be active and involved in something they enjoy. Besides the health benefits, youths' self-esteem and social well-being get a boost. Anxiety and stress is reduced. Youth connect with positive adult role models and they develop new skills.

Activity habits learned in youth are more likely to carry into adulthood. For some ideas, check out the *A-Z Youth Activity Guide*. See page 1.



AR&LE

THE ADAPTIVE RECREATION AND Learning Exchange (AR&LE) offers recreational, leisure and community education programs that are specifically designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the cities of Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina and Richfield. For more information, call Parks and Recreation or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us.

Inclusion services provided

Under the direction of the Adaptive Recreation Supervisor, inclusion services allow participants with disabilities to fully participate in Parks and Recreation programs. For more information, call Parks and Recreation or e-mail parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

BLOOMINGTON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (BAA)

BAA OFFERS BASEBALL AND softball programs for boys and girls, age 5 through 12, including a mini-mite program for kids, age 5. For information on programs, call the BAA Information Line at 952-888-0807 or visit www.baaonline.org.

YOUTH SPORTS



GIDEON H. POND HOUSE
POND-DAKOTA MISSION PARK
401 E. 104TH ST.

POND-DAKOTA MISSION PARK IS THE SITE OF THE GIDEON POND HOUSE that was constructed in 1856. Listed on both the National and Minnesota Registers of Historic Places, the restored Federal-style, two-story brick house is open for tours on the third Sunday of each month from 1:30 - 4 p.m. Admission is \$3. The house is also available for tours by appointment.

The Pond-Dakota Mission Park offers activities for all ages. Some of the best qualities of the park include: miles of hiking and mountain biking trails; wildlife that live along the river; native and non-native plant species; and rich historical and cultural perspective.

OPEN HOUSE ACTIVITIES AT THE PARK

Visit the Pond-Dakota Mission Park on the following Sundays, from 1:30 - 4 p.m., and learn more about your community’s heritage.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLOOMINGTON
FROM MOUND BUILDERS TO
MALL BUILDERS

John Crampton presents the history of Bloomington with an emphasis on the Old Town Hall. Join an experienced guide on a tour of the valley trails before or after the lecture.

Date: Sunday, March 21.
Time: Lecture 2 – 3 p.m.
Guided walks 1:30 p.m., 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.



MAPLE SYRUP MAKING

Learn to make maple syrup the traditional way with Jim and Chris Scanlon. Enjoy demonstrations on tapping trees for sap and the production of maple sugar.

Date: Sunday, March 21.
Time: 1:30 – 4 p.m.



BLOOMINGTON
YESTERDAY



AGNES MOIR
1856-1929

AGNES MOIR WAS THE DAUGHTER of Gideon Pond, a missionary and one of Bloomington’s earliest European settlers. Agnes married Joseph McElroy Moir on March 18, 1874. They had eight children and lived on the south side of the intersection of Penn Avenue and Old Shakopee Road. Moir Park is part of the old Moir farmstead.

*Photo courtesy
Bloomington
Historical Society.*

BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

A SPECTACULAR NEW HOME FOR THE ARTS

BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS IS LOCATED IN THE BLOOMINGTON CIVIC Plaza at the corner of West 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road. This first-class facility houses eight organizations that comprise the Bloomington Fine Arts Council (BFAC). For more information, call the BFAC at 952-563-8567.

ROSE SCHNEIDER
GIFT SHOP

Hours: M - F 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sa 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Su 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

BLOOMINGTON
CIVIC THEATRE
COMPANY

Stephen Sondheim’s Tony Award-winning musical runs through February 21. For more information, call 952-563-8575.



THURSDAY MUSICAL
CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS

For an end-the-week stress reliever, surround yourself with classical music in the **Schneider Theater**. The morning concerts are on **Thursdays, March 11 and 25, at 10:30 a.m.** Purchase tickets at the door for \$10. For more information, call 612-333-0313.

NOTE-ABLE SINGERS
CONCERT

Join us on **Tuesday, March 16, at 7 p.m.** at Edinborough Park, 7700 York Avenue South, Edina.

CONTINENTAL BALLET
CINDERELLA

This beautiful production won the Continental Ballet Company recognition by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts. Choreography is by founder/director Riet Velthuisen of Bloomington. Held in the **Schneider Theater**, the ballet will be performed **Friday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m.**, and **Sunday, March 28, at 3 p.m.** Call 952-563-8562 for ticket information.

TASTE OF CHOCOLATE

THE BLOOMINGTON FINE ARTS COUNCIL will hold its 9th annual "Taste of Chocolate" Midwest dessert competition and fundraising event on Sunday, March 21, at the Radisson Hotel South, 7800 Normandale Boulevard. Tickets are \$30 for mayor’s reception, \$20 for general admission and \$25 for general admission at the door. For tickets, call 952-563-8567.



BLOOMINGTON ART CENTER

GREENBERG GALLERY EXHIBIT
View the dramatic drawings of Marilyn Cuellar, Jason Jaglo, Holly Nelson and Anita Ophoven from **February 27 through April 9** at the **Greenberg Gallery**. The **opening reception is Friday, February 27, from 6 to 8 p.m.**

BLOOMINGTON ART CENTER
GALLERY PLAYERS

THE ODD COUPLE
This delightful comedy written by Neil Simon made Felix and Oscar American icons. Revisit these unforgettable characters in the **Schneider Theater**. The fun begins: **Thursdays - Saturdays, March 4 - 20 at 7:30 p.m.**; **Sundays, March 14, 21 at 2 p.m.**; and **Saturday, March 20*, 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$12.

**ASL interpreted and audio described.*

CONTACT PUBLIC WORKS,
952-563-8750
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THESE TOPICS.

HOME ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME

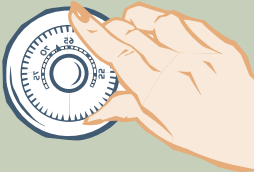
ENERGY AND MONEY SAVING IDEAS

AN AVERAGE U.S. HOUSEHOLD
SPENDS ABOUT \$1,300 PER YEAR
ON UTILITY BILLS.

SAVING ENERGY AT HOME DOESN'T
require a major investment of money –
or even your time. The Minnesota
Department of Commerce Energy's
HouseWarming guide offers ideas that
can save a typical homeowner at least
\$100 to \$200 a year. Suggestions
include:

HOME HEATING

Lower the
thermostat by
at least 5
degrees while
you're at work or
asleep, and save on your heating bill.



Close a bedroom door and heat
register during the day, or close off an
unused room entirely, and save about
\$50 a year.

Open shades to let in the
sun's warmth – close them at
night to keep heat inside.

Lock windows to tighten
the seal and stop heat leaks.

WATER HEATING

Turn down the temperature
setting on your water heater to 120 - 125
degrees to save energy and prevent
scalding.

Fix a
dripping hot
water faucet
that can cost
more than \$35 a
year. Usually it
only needs a new
washer.



APPLIANCES

Replace worn-out refrigerator door
gaskets.

Save half the energy a dishwasher
uses by not using the dry cycle.

Turn off or unplug appliances,
especially while you're away.

For more information, call the
Energy Information Center at 651-296-
5175 or visit <http://www.state.mn.us>,
keywords "energy saving ideas." The
brochure will be available at the
Bloomington Home Improvement Fair.
See page 1.

GOT REMODELING PLANS?

If you're planning a remodeling
project, consider increasing the energy
efficiency of your home at minimal,
additional cost. The Home Improvement
Fair offers good ideas on remodeling
and building projects. *See page 1.*

To save money and
protect our
environment, it makes
sense to buy the most
efficient appliances
and to conserve energy.
Every time you buy a
home appliance, tune up your
furnace or replace a light bulb,
you're making a decision that

affects the air we breath, the water
we drink and the ground we walk.
Electricity is generated in a
number of ways. Approximately
60 percent of the electricity in
Minnesota comes from fossil fuels
that can pollute the air and water.
Every kilowatt-hour saved by
switching to a more efficient
appliance or light bulb reduces

pollution. Consider supporting
renewable energy sources –
contact your utility company for
more information. Take energy
use into consideration when
purchasing household products
and follow these tips to make your
home an energy-efficient one.



EARTH ACTION HERO

ANNETTE "THE ENERGY SAVER"

TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE THE
environment may seem overwhelming.
You may think that you don't have the
time or the resources to make much of a
difference - but one person can help.
Throughout the year these pages will
highlight individuals who are taking
action to protect the earth. Their actions
prove that as you save our natural
resources you can also save money.
Here's your neighbor in action.

"The Energy Saver"

A resident for 43 years, Annette was
thinking about selling her home to
move into a condominium. But before
the 1953 three-bedroom rambler could
be put on the market, the electricity
needed to be upgraded. After the new
electrical service was installed in
January 2003, Annette decided that with

a few more energy-efficient upgrades,
she would prefer to stay in her home.

With the help of a deferred home
improvement loan through
Bloomington's Housing and
Redevelopment Authority (*see page 8*),
Annette installed a new heating system
changing from oil to gas, attic
insulation, vinyl siding, new windows
and a new front door.

"There is a big difference in the new
windows and the original 50-year-old
windows," Annette said. "They don't
steam or ice up, there are no drafts and
they are easier to clean."

Her heating bills are lower too.
Annette compared her August 2002 bills
of \$84 per month to her August 2003
bills of \$45 per month after a new air
conditioner and furnace were installed –
a savings of almost 50 percent.

Way to go, Annette!

MORE ENERGY SAVING TIPS

CHECK YOUR HOME'S WINDOWS AND DOORS

WINDOWS AND DOORS OFTEN ACCOUNT
for 35 to 40 percent of a home's heat loss
in the winter and an even larger fraction
of heat gain in the summer. When
shopping for new windows, check the
label for the U-factor. A 0.35 or less U-
factor and a solar heat gain coefficient of
0.55 or less is recommended.
Weatherstrip and caulk around old
windows and doors.

HEATING SYSTEM

A comfortable and healthy home
requires an efficient, sound heating
system. It is critical to recognize that the
elements in your home are interrelated.
Adding insulation, caulking, replacing
windows or remodeling your kitchen
can affect the efficiency and safe
operation of flame-burning appliances.
For example, adding a kitchen fan will
alter the operation of a water heater and
many furnaces.

When replacing your furnace, get
the most energy efficient one. The

ENERGY MYTHS UNCOVERED

ENERGY MYTH:

Using hot water to flush grease
down drains prevents clogging.



Cold water helps
solidify grease,
preventing it from
sticking to pipes. Save hot water by
using cold water to flush grease
down drains and through garbage
disposals.

ENERGY MYTH:

You need really hot water to
sterilize dishes and clothes.



Even at the hottest
setting on your water
heater, dishes and
clothes are not sterilized.

ENERGY MYTH:

It's better to leave a light on instead
of turning it off when you know you
will be using it a short time later.



A bulb that is on for
one second uses one
second's worth of
electricity – no more, no less. This is
true even for fluorescent bulbs – so
turn lights off whenever they're
serving no purpose.

Source: *Energy Myth and Facts*
from the Minnesota Department
of Commerce

payback will be short and will save you
hundreds of dollars on your fuel bill. An
old furnace, even when it's running well,
may extract only 60 percent of the
available heat from the fuel. That means
only 60 cents of your heating dollar is
going into the house to heat; the rest is
going out the chimney. In contrast,
many new furnaces are so efficient that
they waste less than a nickel of every
dollar spent, and some as little as 25
percent of the electrical energy your
standard furnace may consume.

2004 CITYWIDE GARAGE SALES

TURN YOUR TREASURES INTO CASH



THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION presents the 5th Annual Citywide Garage Sale to be held June 3, 4 and 5. Watch for more information in the April Briefing. For more information, call Creekside Community Center at 952-563-4957 V/TTY.

SPRING 2004 CURBSIDE CLEAN-UP

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Location	Regular trash day is:	Curbside pickup is Saturday:
East of Portland	Monday	April 17
Portland to Penn	Tuesday	April 24
Penn to France	Wednesday	May 1
FRANCE TO NORMANDALE	Thursday	MAY 8*
West of Normandale	Friday	May 22

* PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE.

CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER

LOCATED AT 9801 PENN AVENUE SOUTH, THE CENTER HOUSES THE HUMAN Service’s senior program. For more information on activities, call 952-563-4948; 952-563-4957 V/TTY.

FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE

FREE INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE AT CREEKSIDE ON A first-come, first-served basis to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines. Two programs at Creekside include:

ACCOUNTABILITY MINNESOTA

In partnership with FamiLink-Bloomington, AccountAbility Minnesota will provide tax assistance to individuals with incomes of \$25,000 or less and families with incomes of \$35,000 or less.

When: Mondays, February 2 - April 12
(except February 16).
Tuesdays, February 3, 10, 24 and April 6 and 13.
Time: 6 - 9 p.m.
When: Saturdays, February 7 - April 10.
Time: 9 a.m. - noon.

AARP TAX-AIDE

In partnership with the City of Bloomington, AARP Tax-Aide will provide free tax preparation services to middle- and low-income taxpayers, with special attention to those age 60 and older. The AARP Tax-Aide program prepares personal income tax returns including the 1040, 1040A and 1040EZ. Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance.

When: Mondays and Wednesdays, February 2 - April 14.
Time: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Tax forms available at Creekside

Federal tax forms that can be photocopied are available at Creekside.

GET ON BOARD WITH LRT

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HIAWATHA LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM THAT WILL SOON begin operation from downtown Minneapolis to Bloomington. Jennifer Lovaasen will present slides of the route and stations, and answer questions about light rail operation at an AARP meeting on Monday, March 8, at 1 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Minnesota Valley Room at Creekside. Everyone is welcome to attend.



GET FIT

HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OFFERS A wide variety of fun fitness opportunities for older adults. Stay healthy and active with aerobics, tai chi, ballet, ballroom dance, yoga, walking programs, semi-annual dances and more.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

BLOOMINGTON GETS A TASTE OF JAPAN

SISTER CITY ORGANIZATION SPONSORS CULTURAL EVENING

JOIN THE BLOOMINGTON Sister City Organization for an evening of food, fun and festivities that will include stories of travel to Japan, cultural interactive activities and a Japanese dinner. A raffle and silent auction will also be held. Taste of Japan is Friday, March 12, from 5 – 8:30 p.m. at Cedar Valley Church, 8600 Bloomington Avenue South. For more information, call 952-563-8735.



POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH

“BUY” INTO IT!

TODAY’S YOUTH FACE MANY CHALLENGES. Statistics on youth alcohol consumption, drug use, school violence, obesity, teen pregnancy and other issues are startling. Bloomington United for Youth (BUY) is comprised of community members who work to prevent youth from slipping into harmful lifestyles. BUY’s three pillars to achieve this goal:

1 Youth involvement

Projects that have generated positive results include Bloomington

Youth Coffeehouse Initiative, a youth-run, adult-guided, work-in-progress that will provide a safe place for teens to socialize and “Tomorrow’s Voices Today,” a youth-run cable tv show for teens.

2 Coalition building

Businesses, educational institutions, civic and non-profits groups, the faith community and the City of Bloomington formed a coalition dedicated to youth development.

3 Five Promises

The Five Promises are tools used to build and maintain the foundation of positive development of youth. *See sidebar.*

Windows of opportunity

Youth are a vital element in strengthening the community, the country and the future. BUY is designed to “open windows of opportunity” for youth and channel potentially harmful lifestyles into positive and meaningful energy. For more information, call David Miller at 952-563-4918.

BUY’S FIVE PROMISES IDENTIFIED FROM COLIN POWELL’S “AMERICA’S PROMISE FOR YOUTH.”

- Mentor** - Ongoing relationships with caring adults.
- Protect** - Safe places with structured activities for non-school hours.
- Nurture** - A healthy start and future by maintaining the mind and body.
- Teach and learn** - Marketable skills through effective education.
- Serve** - Opportunities to give back through community service.



Do something constructive with a home improvement loan

The Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is still accepting applications for its Home Improvement Deferred Loan Program.

Since 1975, the HRA has loaned homeowners more than \$6.5 million to help maintain the condition of housing and neighborhoods in the city.

Loans of up to \$30,000 with no monthly payments are available to Bloomington homeowners. Repayment occurs when the home is sold, transferred or conveyed. Interest is a simple 5 percent per year for the first 10 years based on the original loan.

Eligible repairs include: replacement of roofs, electrical and plumbing systems; gutters, windows, doors, insulation, siding, soffits and fascia; exterior painting; and foundation, sidewalk or step repairs.

Ineligible repairs include: decorating; additions; finishing of basements; remodeling; and garage construction. Homeowner labor will no longer be permitted, due to federal lead paint regulations.

Application guidelines

Homes built before 1978 will require a Lead Risk Assessment and all lead-contaminated surfaces must be addressed.

To apply for a Home Improvement Deferred Loan, you must have sufficient equity in your home to cover the amount of the loan.

Income guidelines apply. *See table.*

Persons in household	Maximum gross income
1	\$39,550
2	\$45,200
3	\$50,850
4	\$56,500
5	\$61,000
6	\$65,550
7	\$70,050
8 or more	\$74,600

Deadline

Loan applications will be accepted at the HRA office in Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, until February 27. For more information or an application, call 952-563-8937.

Ordinance changes

Motorized scooters and skateboards restricted

The use of "recreational vehicles" that was already prohibited by State statute on streets, parks and sidewalks is now clearly defined in the City's ordinance. Amendments were made by the City Council last December.

Based on safety concerns, the amendments prohibit the use of motorized scooters and skateboards, go-

carts and mini bikes on Bloomington streets, parks and sidewalks. These vehicles can only be legally used on private property with the owner's permission.

Motorized scooters and skateboards meet the broad definition of a motor vehicle by State statute; however, they cannot be licensed for roadway use

because they lack power and safety features. New amendments also make most minor offenses petty misdemeanors that might result in a fine, instead of a more serious misdemeanor violation that could be a jail-able offense.

For information, call Lieutenant Paul McCullough at 952-563-8834.

City ordinance regulates solicitors

In response to residents' concerns about unwanted solicitors and aggressive salespersons calling at their doors, the City Council has amended the section of its ordinance called "Hawkers, Peddlers and Transient Merchants." The amendments:

- Require solicitors to carry a City-issued license and identification card when operating.
- Define the rights of residents to exclude anyone soliciting door-to-door from their homes.
- Require that all door-to-door solicitors must not operate between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m., enter a property with

a posted "No Solicitation" or similar sign or use aggressive sales techniques.

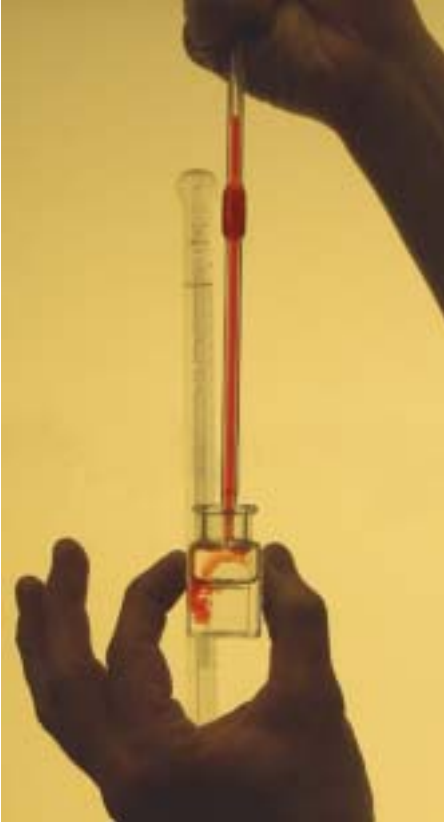
- Do not regulate the exchange of ideas, where the person simply wishes to speak with the occupant and is not asking for any donation, contribution or compensation.

During the hearing, representatives of some non-profit groups expressed concerns that the ordinance changes would not impact their fundraising sales. The ordinance exempts non-profit, religious, political and educational organizations from licensing; however, they must abide by operation hours and have identification with them that

allows a resident or City staff to verify the group's tax-exempt status.

Examples of acceptable identification include an identification card issued by the organization, a business card, or the name of the organization printed on the goods offered for sale, order sheets, sales receipts or invoices. These provisions should allow sales of Girl Scout cookies, Boy Scout holiday decorations and school fundraisers to proceed in the way they have in past years.

For information, call the City Clerk's Office at 952-563-4923 or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword "solicitor."



City receives water fluoridation quality award

Bloomington Utilities captured the 2002 Water Fluoridation Quality Award by the Minnesota Department of Health and Department of Human Services for its commitment in providing fluoridated drinking water.

A great achievement

Fluoridation of drinking water has been a major factor in the decline of tooth decay. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognized it as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements in the 20th century.

Dedicated efforts

CDC National Fluoridation Engineer David Apanian said of Bloomington Utilities, "Your dedicated efforts have improved oral health for your family, neighbors, businesses and community. Thank you for your part in providing this wonderful public health measure to your Bloomington neighbors and friends."

Safe food is a team effort Industry members collaborate to keep food safe

When you go out to eat in Bloomington, rest assured someone has your safety in mind. Food safety is a team effort and, in November, a recognition luncheon was held to honor members of the Food Safety Collaborative Task Force and the Food Safety Award Program recipients and nominees from the past two years.

The Food Safety Collaborative Task Force is made up of Environmental Health staff and members of the

food industry in Bloomington and Richfield. Working together, they address food safety issues in our community, increase communication, and expand food manager and worker safety training programs.

For the past two years, the Advisory Board of Health has joined with Diamond Service Awards to sponsor the Food Safety Award Program to honor those who provide food safely. Award categories include restaurants, hotels,

grocery stores, fast food restaurants and other establishments where food is prepared and served in Bloomington.

If you are a member of the food industry and would like to join the Food Safety Collaborative, meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. For more information, call Petrona Lee at 952-563-8970.